

A Voice from Syria on Christmas Day: “All of us are lost.”

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Following are some key points from a discussion with my friend Qusay (not his real name) in Damascus. He is a translator and university professor. The situation in Syria continues to evolve. See the X account of Tim Anderson @TimAnd2037 for videos showing ongoing atrocities which contradict the western and allied media narrative.

Syria Is Secular

“I’m Muslim but we celebrate Christmas. Syria is a secular country. We celebrate all other religions and sects. I remember when I was a child, my father used to celebrate this day and say, ‘this is the day of the birth of Jesus Christ, our prophet. So we must enjoy it. We must spread love, peace.’ This is part of the Syrian mentality to celebrate all these events because we learn from this love, sacrifice, peace and these things. So this is something of our tradition. We hope this will not end.”

Situation in Damascus

“The first four days after Assad’s departure were chaos, looting and stealing. After that, there has been a kind of peace in Damascus. But today, the situation is very dangerous again. My wife and I went to buy some things for the house. But there was too much firing of weapons. We had to return home. It’s now dangerous again.”

Situation in Aleppo

“In Aleppo, they banned one of the prominent minority religious sites. Because of this, there have been demonstrations. Two people were killed. There was a pretrial hearing and yesterday three judges were killed while they were going home. Things are getting worse. Some people are now saying ‘We are going to arm our people. You are unable to protect us, you are against us.’ This is the dangerous situation today.”

Curfew

“We have curfew for 12 hours. People are not allowed to go out. Before this, things were calm and they were quiet. But for today, yes, things are getting worse. We hope they will not get out of control. “

Food, Electricity, and Fuel

“There is electricity in Aleppo only one half or one hour per day. At the beginning in Aleppo, the new rulers brought in power generators and for two or three days there was

much more electricity. Before they took over the rest of Syria. Now people rarely have electricity. I live in Dummar project, one of the good areas in Damascus. We have electricity for one hour every 12 hours, just two hours per day.

“Food prices have recently gone down. But many people don’t have money and cannot pay. The new government said that people will not get their salary for this month because in Syria people used to get their salaries in advance. They said, we will not give you your salary because you already took it at the beginning of December. So people now are really starving because of this.

“Transportation costs have increased four to five times. It is almost not worth it for many people to go to work. The new leadership say that they are now studying this and will raise the salaries three or four times. But according to what we see, these are all just false attempts to calm people down.

“Before they took over the rest of Syria, they promised the people of Aleppo that it would be paradise. They said they are going to give people the salary equivalent to 250 US dollars per month. That is a big increase and people were very happy for this. Now, after they took over the rest of Syria, they said, okay, we cannot do this because there are a lot of obligations and now we will study salaries and let’s see.”

Threats to Syrian Industry

“The entry of Turkish goods are now threatening Syrian industry. Turkish goods are coming into Syria with low prices and better quality. Syrian industry has been damaged by western sanctions, the high prices of fuel and electricity, and other factors. So they cannot compete with those of Turkey. Just yesterday, a leader of industry called on the new government to impose taxes on imported goods. Syrian industry needs some protection. So we don’t know where things will go. Rumors are everywhere in Syria.”

Security

“So far the only security are those who came from HTS. They are very few in number. Recently, they made announcements for the previous soldiers or policemen to return. The new leadership said they will make a reconciliation for all previously recruited soldiers or policemen. They said to go to these centers and if they see that you didn’t make any crimes against the opposition or any torture or things, they’re going to recruit you within the new staff of police. We will see.”

Colleges and Universities

“They changed the names of universities into other names. They changed everything related to Baath Party or Assad to other names. The public universities are now open. Each day has a daylight prayer inside the university. They stop all lectures and have this prayer and all people group to have it. But it’s free for you to pray or not to pray. They don’t force anyone to participate. Yet. So far they are not enforcing any Islamic rules. For instance, women can go to streets without hijab or scarf.

“Private universities were looted and still have postponed classes. Classes are to resume on January 4. “

West and Allies Are Coming to Damascus

“The new rulers are receiving delegations from all around the world. But so far we haven’t seen any good coming from this. People start to lose their patience because they see rich countries come to us and nobody brings any fuel, oil or needed supplies. So why are they coming if they don’t have immediate solutions? There are delegations from USA, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan and many other countries. So people say, okay, it’s good that now they have these relations, but what is the effect? Why hasn’t anything changed?”

Syrians Returning or Departing?

“Many friends told me that the moment they can leave the country, they’re going to depart. They are seeing the situation very dark with the advancements of Israel into Syrian lands. And unfortunately now we don’t have any power to resist because Israel destroyed all the military capacities of the Syrian army. So people, they know that things are not going to be in a good situation. People are very afraid. Many people don’t have money to go to their work or to feed their babies or to do anything.

“Are people returning from abroad? It is hard to tell. At the beginning there were estimates that around 20,000 Syrians returned from Turkey to their villages. Turkey is facilitating the return of Syrians. This is part of the whole program. But other Syrians have left. Especially Shia Muslims. I know a lot, especially who were soldiers. They left for Lebanon because they were afraid for their security and safety.”

Why Did the Syria Army Collapse?

“This is a mystery because there are no true data about this. Some people say that Assad was informed by Russia that they can’t protect him any more. So he informed the army that they should surrender and they don’t need to fight back. There are many stories. What is true? Unfortunately President Assad didn’t leave any statement behind him, which makes people very angry to be frank with you.”

Public Reaction to Assad’s Departure

“Soldiers were fighting for the country when they found out that Bashar al Assad left the country. This was irresponsible from his side because there were people who were depending on him, they were believing in him and suddenly he left everything. At least he should tell people that I’m leaving, you can surrender.

“He really turned people against him. He didn’t warn his soldiers or high officials or anyone else that he’s leaving. Another thing is that the images from Sednaya Prison were really terrifying. And this is the thing that turned all people against the regime because they have live video broadcasting from Sednaya Prison. So people have seen this live broadcasting. Why should you torture these people? So yes, these two things turned people against him.

“When Aleppo was lost, he never spoke out. He never showed up. He never encouraged people, he never said, we will get Aleppo back. Any normal person would say something. But he lived in his ivory tower. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey said that two days before the fall they contacted him and wanted to speak with him, to

negotiate. But he refused. I don't know why he committed these mistakes. By his mistakes, all has been lost.

"And then you leave without telling your people, the people who lost their lives, the people who sacrificed their children for you because they believed you are going to unite Syrians. We know that he could unite Syrians, we know this, but by these mistakes that he made, all of us are lost."

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